

REMARKS

Amendments

Claims 1, 2, 10-12, and 16 are amended to use language in accordance with conventional US practice. Also, the "line" feature deleted from claims 2 and 12 is now recited in new claims 24 and 25, respectively. These amendments are not intended to narrow the scope of protection sought to be covered by the claims.

New claims 26-29 are directed to further features of the invention and are supported throughout the disclosure. See, e.g., page 4, line 29-page 5, line 3, and page 14, lines 12-13.

Election

In response to the Restriction Requirement presented in the Office Action of March 10, 2006, applicants hereby elect Group I, claims 1-10. New claims 24, 26, 28, and 29 also read on the elected Group I. However, the Restriction is respectfully traversed.


Group I is said to be directed to a process whereas Group II is said to be directed to an apparatus for practicing the process of Group I. In the Restriction, it is alleged that the apparatus can be used to practice another materially different process, namely the removal of contamination from a wafer. Firstly, it is not seen how the asserted hypothetical process is "materially different" as both processes would apparently involve removal of undesired material from a substrate. Secondly, the Restriction does not explain how the apparatus could be used to remove only particles, rather than a layer of material.

As for Groups I and III, the restriction asserts that the process can be used to make another materially different product such as a product wherein a center region of a layer is remove. However, claim 1 of Group I expressly recites that the process involves "removing said edge region by evaporation by means of said laser beam."

Thus, withdrawal of the restriction between Groups I, II and III is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this response or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-3402.

Respectfully submitted,



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